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Letter dated 14 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to Security Council resolutions 2093 (2013) and 2111 (2013), by which the Council requested me to set benchmarks for when it might be appropriate to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping operation to Somalia, work closely with the African Union in a joint review of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and present options and recommendations to the Council by 10 October 2013.

On this basis, the United Nations and the African Union conducted a joint mission to Somalia to establish benchmarks for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation and assess AMISOM. In line with my report to the Security Council of 31 January 2013 (S/2013/69) and in view of the recent deterioration of the security situation in Somalia, including the attack on the United Nations common compound on 19 June 2013 in Mogadishu, in which one United Nations staff member, three personnel of a company contracted by the United Nations and four non-United Nations security guards were killed, I also requested the joint mission to make recommendations with regard to the security of United Nations personnel.

The joint African Union-United Nations mission was conducted between 26 August and 6 September 2013. The mission, which was co-led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the African Union Peace and Security Commission, included military, police, political and logistics experts from relevant United Nations departments, the African Union Commission, AMISOM, the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), as well as some Member States and the European Union. The mission visited all four sectors of AMISOM deployment and held consultations with relevant national and international partners in Somalia, as well as in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. The findings of the joint mission are summarized in its report, which the African Union Peace and Security Council considered on 10 October 2013.

Benchmarks for a peacekeeping operation

With respect to the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia, I recall the advice presented in my report of 31 January 2013 (S/2013/69, para. 83). In that report, I recommended that in the current context of combat operations in Somalia, the African Union has a comparative advantage as a provider

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of military support. The option of a United Nations peacekeeping operation should be revisited as conventional combat operations against Al-Shabaab end, in consultation with the Somali authorities.

The central finding of the joint mission is that, in order to attain the minimum security conditions required to support peace consolidation in Somalia, it is essential to further degrade the capacity of the Al-Shabaab insurgency to launch asymmetric attacks. To achieve this, there must be an effective resumption of the military campaign against Al-Shabaab, which would rapidly reduce its capacity to control key strategic locations and thereby its capacity to forcefully recruit, train and finance its operations.

In parallel, it will be necessary to improve the capacity of the Somali forces to progressively sustain control of areas recaptured from Al-Shabaab, supported increasingly by the Somali national police and AMISOM formed police units. Such advances would in turn enable a safer environment for the political process in major cities. It is the responsibility of the Somali authorities, supported by UNSOM and AMISOM, to ensure the deployment of agreed local administrations to govern and provide services in newly recovered areas in a timely manner, and to coordinate military efforts with advances in political governance and service delivery.

The joint mission found that progress made towards meeting the above goals should enable a gradual reduction of the combat role of AMISOM in Somalia and allow a transition to a role of oversight and rapid response in support of the Somali national security forces. At that stage, AMISOM could be right-sized and, subject to a further decision of the Security Council, handed over to a United Nations peacekeeping operation. This sequencing should guarantee the expansion of recovery of key military strategic targets and sustenance of their control.

To enable the monitoring of progress towards these objectives, the joint mission identified a set of benchmarks that would pave the way for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation at the right time, as a step towards an eventual complete handover to the Somali security institutions. These are: (a) political agreement on the finalization of a federal vision and formation of administrations and states; (b) extension of State authority through local administrations in recovered areas, in line with the provisional constitution; (c) degrading Al-Shabaab to the point that it is no longer an effective force through a comprehensive strategy that includes political, economic and military components; (d) a significant improvement in the physical security situation, with a 30 to 50 per cent reduction in improvised explosive device attacks and effective control of access to key urban centres; (e) improved capability of the Somali National Army to hold the majority of major cities in south-central Somalia with a critical mass (10,000) of well-trained and well-equipped soldiers; (f) broad agreement on the major security arrangements on the role and functions of the Somali police; (g) the provision of equipment and sustainability for at least 4,000 Somali national police to contribute to peaceful elections and maintain law and order within a more permissive security environment; and (h) the consent of the Federal Government and the support of important segments of the Somali population for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

I will continue to monitor progress against these benchmarks, in consultation with the African Union, and provide the Council with updates in my regular reports.

Security situation

I am extremely concerned by the findings of the joint mission with respect to the current security situation in Somalia. The mission concluded that the political progress made over the past year and the military gains against Al-Shabaab that have been achieved in recent years are at serious risk of being reversed.

The findings of the joint mission indicate that Al-Shabaab has deliberately shifted tactics since May 2013, from conventional to asymmetrical warfare, in recovered areas, including the Somali capital. They target particularly the Government, State institutions and the international presence working in Somalia, including the United Nations.

In the face of these threats, and in the absence of enablers and force multipliers that would have permitted a sustained offensive against Al-Shabaab, the Somali National Army and AMISOM have now assumed a largely defensive, static posture. All assets currently available are required to protect existing locations and supply routes, which are increasingly vulnerable, as the lull in the offensive has allowed Al-Shabaab space to prepare more ambitious complex attacks.

In addition to causing the death of many innocent civilians, including women and children, the deterioration in the security situation threatens to undermine the fragile Somali political process, especially by preventing the Federal Government from undertaking essential tasks of outreach and State-building. Representatives of the Federal Government are at constant risk as they work to foster the political process and build State institutions. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has so far survived a number of attempts on his life.

The shift in tactics by Al-Shabaab also poses a significant challenge to the recently strengthened presence of the international community in Somalia. The attack against the United Nations common compound in Mogadishu on 19 June 2013 has seriously, though temporarily, affected the capacity of the United Nations country team to develop, deliver and monitor programmes, particularly in Mogadishu. Movement restrictions are hampering the pace at which UNSOM is able to fully deploy and support and operate alongside Somali counterparts.

In addition, these threats have implications beyond the region. The horror of the attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi from 21 to 24 September 2013, for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, is the most recent and worrisome evidence that Al-Shabaab is able to plan, rehearse and implement complex attacks threatening peace and stability in Somalia and beyond.

In the immediate term, and in order to regain momentum and avoid further reversals, there is an urgent need to resume and strengthen the military campaign against Al-Shabaab. This will require enhancement of international support to Somali National Security Forces and to AMISOM, some of which would be temporary, in order to enable the completion of offensive operations and create the space for the continuation of the political process and peacebuilding efforts. Meanwhile, additional measures are required to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel mandated by the Security Council to assist the Federal Government in delivering on a range of initiatives.

I therefore fully support the recommendations of the joint African Union-United Nations mission, as follows:

Enhancement of Somali National Army and AMISOM capacity

First, I fully support the recommendation of the joint mission on the need to provide targeted support to front line units of the Somali National Army conducting joint operations with AMISOM. Based on the force requirements, I therefore recommend that the Security Council authorize UNSOA to provide relevant Somali National Army units of up to 10,000 troops engaged in joint operations with AMISOM with a limited package of non-lethal support. This should be done in a manner similar to the support provided by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This limited support would cover mobility, food, fuel, tentage and in-theatre medical support, in order to gradually strengthen the troops' ability to hold and expand recovered areas. Resourcing this package from United Nations assessed contributions would send a clear political message that the Security Council is strongly behind Somali efforts to end the insurgency in Somalia.

Simultaneously, there is a need to urgently increase AMISOM capabilities to allow it, operating alongside Somali forces, to secure additional territory in southern Somalia and thereby deny Al-Shabaab the opportunity to raise resources and to forcefully recruit and train personnel for asymmetric attacks. In this regard, I support the recommendation of the joint mission that (a) the African Union Peace and Security Council authorize a limited increase in the current troop level of AMISOM of 17,731 uniformed personnel by the addition of three infantry battalions with a total of 2,550 troops, for a period of 18 to 24 months; and (b) that the Security Council correspondingly increase the maximum number of AMISOM personnel to whom UNSOA is authorized to provide the logistical support package referred to in paragraph 4 of resolution 2093 (2013). This would allow AMISOM to jointly plan with and assist Somali forces in resuming the military campaign against Al-Shabaab and to sustain existing and newly gained territories more effectively, until the Somali National Army is able to do so independently through the ongoing bilateral support, in addition to the recommended measures outlined above.

I agree with the findings of the joint mission that it is not realistic for AMISOM to achieve the desired effect of resuming the military campaign without air assets. In particular, the force urgently requires the helicopters and other enablers that were approved by the Security Council in its resolution 2036 (2012) but that have not yet been successfully deployed to AMISOM. I call upon African and non-African Member States to come forward urgently to provide the necessary assets, for which the Security Council has already authorized support and which are planned in the United Nations logistics package support.

Additionally, specialized units are urgently required to enable AMISOM to effectively support offensive operations and secure recovered areas, including by providing in-situ training to Somali units operating alongside them. I therefore support the recommendation of the joint African Union-United Nations team that, in addition to the 20,281 troops referred to above, (a) the African Union Peace and Security Council also authorize the deployment of enabling units totalling 1,845 additional uniformed personnel to support the logistics, signal, engineers and port security units, as well as the establishment of training teams and the civilian casualties tracking, analysis and response cell; and that (b) the Security Council correspondingly increase the number of AMISOM uniformed personnel authorized

to UNSOA to provide the logistical support package referred to in paragraph 4 of resolution 2093 (2013).

All support, both to the Somali national security forces and to AMISOM, would be provided in strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (see A/67/775-S/2013/110). This would include conducting risk assessments, identifying and agreeing on mitigation measures and monitoring implementation, as called for under that policy, in order to ensure that the support extended will be used to build a more accountable, effective and credible Somali National Army, in compliance with international standards.

These recommendations amount to a significant, but short-term, enhancement of AMISOM and Somali military capacity. It is necessary to enhance the capacity and capabilities of forces to degrade the ability of Al-Shabaab to obtain financing and forcefully recruit and train, thereby creating the enabling security environment required for long-term political and peacebuilding efforts in Somalia, and the eventual drawdown of the international security presence. AMISOM and the Somali National Army will need to ensure greater joint operational planning to guarantee economy of effort and proper coordination of operations.

Security of United Nations personnel

The current security environment directly affects the ability of the United Nations and the international community to support the Somali authorities and people in Mogadishu and in the regions. United Nations personnel must be able to work effectively in Somalia, including to operate alongside Somali counterparts and to move freely in Mogadishu and recovered areas, in order to deliver their mandates. As indicated in my recommendations for the establishment of UNSOM (see S/2013/239), this requires additional security adjustments to allow our staff to operate safely.

In line with the report of the joint mission, I therefore recommend (a) the immediate deployment, as part of UNSOM, of a static United Nations guard unit to strengthen the security of the UNSOM compound within Mogadishu International Airport, to be provided as contingents from Member States, the details of which would be developed once a decision is taken; (b) the provision by the United Nations of the training and equipment of a dedicated force of approximately 150 elements, drawn from the Somali police, to enable the safe movement of United Nations personnel in Mogadishu and provide security to United Nations convoys until such time as the Somali Federal Government has the capability to fully undertake this task (as decided by the Federal Government, this dedicated force would also serve to make progress towards the establishment of a diplomatic police force capable of fully discharging the responsibilities of Somalia as a host country provider of security; pending the readiness of this dedicated force, the United Nations would continue to rely on the current arrangement with private contractors); and (c) quicken reaction response to security incidents by the Somali national security forces, with support from AMISOM; the relevant Somali security forces performing this quick reaction response should be supported and enhanced bilaterally.

I welcome the assurance given by the African Union that AMISOM will continue to secure the Mogadishu International Airport perimeter and provide

security for United Nations staff working outside of Mogadishu. If authorized, the proposed enhanced capacity for AMISOM is expected to free up more troops. I recommend that these troops be used for securing Mogadishu International Airport until the security situation stabilizes. As the operations of the United Nations continue to expand in accordance with mandates and needs, security provisions in the regions will need to be reassessed.

Conclusions

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the African Union Commission for the strong collaboration and partnership that characterized this important joint exercise, as well as to the Federal Government of Somalia and the members of the Security Council, the European Union and other international partners for their participation in the work of the joint team.

No tribute can adequately reflect the heroic sacrifice of the Somali forces, countries contributing troops to AMISOM and Ethiopia. Let us ensure that, collectively, we shall do our utmost to preserve and expand the gains that over more than two decades have been so hard won for the sake of peace and prosperity in Somalia.

It is difficult, at a time of global financial constraint, to ask for more resources. The international community has already invested much in Somalia, and Somalis themselves have taken extraordinary risks for peace. Together we stand on the threshold of a once-in-a-generation opportunity for peace and stability in Somalia and for stability in the region. Yet, it is my responsibility to stress to the Council that, without the additional support recommended in this letter, our joint investment is at risk of being derailed by the indefensible actions of the Al-Shabaab insurgency. I appeal to the Council to support the foregoing recommendations, which should ultimately pave the way for the exit of all international forces.

Political progress and peacebuilding require a minimum of security to flourish. At the same time, I wish to stress that the solution to the security situation in Somalia is not solely military. The achievement of military objectives must be linked to progress in the political and human rights arena. I welcome the recent steps taken by the Federal Government of Somalia in this regard, especially the launch of the Vision 2016 Conference, the establishment of the National Security Council, the formation of national structures for the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as outreach and reconciliation efforts. I emphasize that the proposed increase in military support to AMISOM and the Somali National Army should be undertaken hand-in-hand with continued progress in the reconstitution of the Somali State and the achievement of key political objectives set out under the New Deal Compact framework. In this regard, I urge all Member States to fulfil their pledges to assist Somalia in its State- and peacebuilding efforts.

Military advances should be coupled with investment in the capacity of civilian institutions to guarantee the rule of law and respect for human rights. In parallel with international support to military goals, I urge Somali political actors urgently to prioritize agreement on broad principles for the nature of policing in Somalia, in line with the Somali federal vision. I support the implementation of the immediate measures outlined by the joint mission on supporting the police in recovered areas through the Police working group. I also expect that the revision of

the AMISOM concept of operations will also identify additional measures with regard to policing, in consultation with the Federal Government of Somalia.

The United Nations will do its utmost to support all these aspects of the peace process in Somalia in line with the mandate given to us by this Council. At the same time, however, our collective effort in Somalia is dependent, as it has been for many years, on a rich partnership with the African Union, the Inter-governmental Authority on Development and Member States. I welcome the commitment of the African Union to quickly generate additional troops and capabilities, and recall the critical importance of predictable funding to support AMISOM. I reiterate my gratitude to the European Union for its unwavering support to AMISOM since its establishment, without which the progress we witness today could not have been achieved. I call upon Member States to redouble their efforts to share the burden of supporting the Somali National Army and AMISOM. I also reiterate the importance of providing well-coordinated bilateral and multilateral assistance and support to the Somali national security forces by Member States.

This is the moment to step up our support to Somalia, and I call on you to seize it. A modest increase in investment now will enhance security for Somalis, their neighbours and the international community now and in the long term.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon